



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About Trichinosis

What is Trichinosis?

Trichinosis is a disease caused by a worm called *Trichinella*, which lives in animals including pigs, bear, dogs, cats, horses, foxes, wolves, walrus, seals and rats. Trichinosis infection is rare in the United States.

How is Trichinosis spread?

You can get trichinosis by eating raw or undercooked meats, especially pork products and wild game, such as bear, seal, or walrus.

Trichinosis is NOT spread from person to person.

Who is at risk for Trichinosis?

Individuals who consume raw or undercooked meats, particularly from bear, pork, wild feline (such as a cougar), fox, dog, wolf, horse, seal, or walrus, are at risk for trichinosis.

What are the symptoms of Trichinosis?

- Diarrhea
- Nausea

- Vomiting
- Stomach cramps
- Fever
- Muscle pain
- Eye swelling
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Chills

How severe the symptoms are depends on how many worms were eaten in the meat. Most people have no symptoms or very mild symptoms. Symptoms usually begin 1 to 2 weeks after exposure. Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and stomach cramps appear first, followed by muscle pain, eye swelling, fatigue, headache and chills. With severe infection, some people may have difficulty moving around or breathing. Death can occur if a severe infection is not treated.

How do I know if I have Trichinosis?

You cannot tell without seeing your doctor. Your doctor may collect a blood sample or sample of muscle tissue (biopsy).

How can Trichinosis be treated?

Your doctor can prescribe medicines (antibiotics) to treat the infection.

How is Trichinosis prevented?

- Always wash hands after handling raw meat.
- Do not eat raw or undercooked pork or wild game meats.
- Use separate cutting boards for meat and other foods.
- Carefully clean all grinders, cutting boards, work surfaces, and utensils with soap and hot water after preparing raw meat.
- Cook meat products until juices run clear or reach an internal temperature of 170° F.
- Curing, drying, smoking or microwaving does not always kill the worms.
- Cook all meat fed to pigs or other animals.
- Do not allow pigs to eat uncooked carcasses of wild animals, including rats.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/trichinellosis/index.html>

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